



# Animas-La Plata Project

Volume 1

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

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## About this Newsletter

This is the first in a series of six newsletters designed to bring you up-to-date information on the environmental review process for final implementation of the Colorado Ute Water Rights Settlement. Our goal is to keep you informed of:

- Key events about the EIS process
- Status of EIS process milestones
- Upcoming dates for release of documents for public review and comment
- Results of public review and comment process

Future editions of the newsletter will be published at approximately 3-month intervals. Look for the next issue in August 1999.

## Supplemental EIS Being Prepared

In January 1999, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced its intention to prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Animas-La Plata Project (ALP) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In compliance with NEPA, the DSEIS will examine several alternatives, including structural and nonstructural options to meet the

conditions of the 1988 Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act. The Bureau of Reclamation intends to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts the Administration Proposal and alternatives may have on the affected environment, including:

- impacts to aquatic resources (to include wetlands identification/mitigation)
- water quality

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## February 1999 Scoping Meetings

Scoping meetings were held in February 1999 to obtain input, questions and concerns, and suggestions from the public. The first meeting was held on February 2 in Durango, Colorado, with approximately 275 attendees. Approximately 100 individuals attended the second meeting, held in Farmington, New Mexico on February 3. The final meeting was held on February 4 in Denver, Colorado. Approximately 50 persons attended that meeting. Some of the major issues presented during the meetings included:

- the need to honor commitments and promises made to the Colorado Ute Tribes in the 1988 Settlement Act
- use of existing facilities to settle the tribal water rights claims
- elimination of irrigation features/providing a project irrigation component
- how and where the water would be used in the absence of irrigation and certain municipal and industrial (M&I) facilities



*Scoping meeting participants review project information*

- the best location for the reservoir site given the project's reduced size and scope
  - ensuring that there will be enough San Juan River Basin water to address future growth and economic development for the Navajo Nation
- The Bureau of Reclamation is evaluating public and agency input obtained during the scoping process. Potential new or modified alternatives may be developed which will be included in the alternatives evaluation phase of the NEPA process.